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NSC BRIEFING

18 March 1954

PROSPECTS FOR A STABLE ITALIAN GOVERNMENT

I. Scelba coalition government precarious:

A. Narrow Chamber majority (300-283) rests on support of 3 minor democratic parties.

B. Cabinet weakened by Montesi scandal.

II. But minor parties want to keep Scelba in office:

A. His cabinet first since June 1953 elections to counter popular appeal of Communists-Nenni Socialists.

B. Government parties fear new elections now.

III. Possibilities of alternative coalition including Monarchists:

A. Monarchists can contribute 40 seats.

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B. But such a move would also mean

1. Withdrawal of Social Democrats (19 seats)
2. Withdrawal of Republicans (5 seats)
3. Probable split of Christian Democrats leaving new coalition without majority.
 - a. Left wing Christian Democrats, who gained in June 1953 elections, are anti-Monarchist.
 - b. Pella Christian Democratic government fell in December largely because of ties with Monarchists.
4. Social Democrats and some left wing Christian Democrats would tend to cooperate with Nenni Socialists.

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C. Monarchists generally cool to
American policy objectives.

1. Insist EDC be made con-
ditional on satisfactory
Trieste solution.

2. Want greater policy-making
role for Italy in NATO.

3. Many want expanded Italian
trade with Orbit.

D. Monarchists oppose reforms
designed to lessen Communist
electoral appeal.

E. Monarchists' desire for in-
stitutional change increases
polarization of Italian
politics between extreme right
and extreme left.

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